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A MARVEL MONTHLY

45p



**FEBRUARY
1982 Nº 382
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19442

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES

**INCORPORATING
SAVAGE
ACTION**

**CAPTAIN BRITAIN!
NIGHT RAVEN TEXT STORY!
THE AVENGERS!
AND GUESS WHAT...?**

STOP PRESS

THE STARBURST TEAM DOES IT AGAIN

That's right. After the enthusiastic response to our first poster magazine effort, *Excalibur* (still available from the address below), we bring you another of our bumper, value for money film tie-ins. Featuring the new John Carpenter movie, *Escape from New York*, the second Starburst Poster Magazine boasts information on the stars, the director and the special effects of the great science fiction film. All this plus a full-size reproduction of the movie poster.

The *Escape from New York* poster magazine is available from all good newsagents, or if in difficulty it can be obtained by sending 85p (which includes postage and packing) to Dangerous Visions, 19f Spital Road, Maldon, Essex. Make all cheques and POs payable to Dangerous Visions. Send no cash!



MARVEL SUPER-HEROES

Editor: Bernie Jaye, Art Assistants: Floron Florenzo; Neil Diamond.

CAPTAIN BRITAIN

AGAINST THE REALM! P.4
The Scion of the UK... a *traitor*?! That's the charge! And the status Crew are prepared to bring him in... dead or alive! Plus: The Secret of the Cap'n's powers and the scintillating Saturnyre!

THE AVENGERS

THE CALL OF THE MOUNTAIN THING! .P.9
Can the Avengers restore a soul to save the world!

'INSIDE COMICS'

COMIC COVER PRODUCTION: PART ONE:
- Inside the Bullpen. P.26

COMPETITION!

Test your skill, luck or both. P.28

NIGHTRAVERN

DEATH'S DIVIDE P.31
An old friend dies in strange circumstances, Night-Raven tries to get to the bottom of it!

MYSTERY STRIP

DOMINIC FORTUNE BRIGAND FOR HIRE!
GHOUL OF MY DREAMS! P.34
Gang-busting with a difference!





AGAINST THE REALM



AND IN A CORNER OF THE ROOM...

HE HAS
SOME KIND OF FORCE
FIELD! HURRY UP
WITH THE ANALYSIS!

HURRY! IF WE DON'T FIND OUT WHAT HE'S
MADE OF SOON, HE'LL HAVE MADE
MINCEMEAT OF US! HE'S GOT THE
STRENGTH OF FIVE MEN!

HARD TO FOCUS IN! WE HAVEN'T USED
THIS SINCE THE SUPER HERO
PURGE OF TEN YEARS
BACK!

DONE IT!
WITHIN SECONDS
WE'LL GET A COM-
PLETE READ-OUT OF
HIS POWERS AND THE
MACHINE WILL TELL US
HIS WEAKNESS! IT'S
NEVER FAILED YET!

AND SO AT LAST, LIKE A
VIOLENT BETRAYAL OF HONOUR...



Skeletal structure: Normal

Weight: 77-180 kg

Height: 195 cm

Origin: Unknown

- Genetically advanced -

Electromagnetic Aura:

Intensity: 20 x Normal

Surface Area: Mentally
controllable.

- Forms force field -

CAPTAIN BRITAIN'S SECRETS ARE RETEILED!



COSTUME: Costume micro-
circuitry in chest and
helmet designed to
amplify brainwaves.

SOURCE: Zircane-

Ultimate Power Source:
Mental concentration.

EFFECTS: Amplified
strength, power of
flight, force field.

...AND HIS DOWNFALL IS MICRO-
ELECTRONICALLY GUARANTEED!

RECOMMENDATION:
DESTROY
CONCENTRATION!



MEANWHILE, THE
AVANT GUARDS
ARE ON THE
DEFENCE

WE'RE
UNDER ATTACK!

SET
FOR MAXIMUM
WARP.



AS BEFORE REALITY
BURSTS...

LIKE A PAPER BAG...



THE TECHNOLOGY
HERE IS SO AD-
VANCED... MUST
BE THE REDS!

THEY
DISAPPEARED!



YOU
SWINE! THEY
WERE MY
MATES!

BOOM



AND SATURVINE SHOWS THAT
SHE TOO IS NOT HELPLESS -

LET'S
GRAB THE
LADY!

OHON
GORGEOUS!



THE ACTION IS AS
SIMPLE...



AS IT IS EFFECTIVE!

FACE IT
GENTLEMEN

YOU
JUST DON'T
KNOW HOW TO
HANDLE A
LADY!





THE AVENGERS®

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PORTRAIT OF A TRAVEL AGENT'S NIGHTMARE! THE NORMALLY SERENE AND SCENIC VILLAGE OF TRANSIA, COULDED IN THE FAIRYTALE VALLEY BELOW WUNDAGORE MOUNTAIN, HAS SUDDENLY BECOME A BATTLEGROUND FOR THE ELEMENTS!

AND CAUGHT IN THAT METEOROLOGICAL HOLOCAUST: SIX MEMBERS OF THE VALIANT, DARING AND, QUITE POSSIBLY, SOON TO BE LATE AVENGERS!

THAT'S THREE ENGINES GONE, CAP! AND THE DIALS ARE DOING FLIPFLOPS! I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN KEEP US IN THE AIR!

THE CALL OF THE MOUNTAIN THING!





WHILE BACK IN THE BUCKING COCKPIT OF THE DISABLED AIRCRAFT, SIMON WILLIAMS IS HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT HIS IMPULSIVE ACT OF HEROISM.



HE FIGHTS, STRAINS, CRIES OUT IN FRUSTRATION...





MEANWHILE, OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE IS THAT VILLAGE. THE MOST LIKELY PLACE FOR QUICKSILVER TO HAVE MADE HIS CALL.

SO WE'D BETTER MAKE TRACKS. WANDA AND PIETRO ARE COUNTING ON OUR--



--HHHEE-EELLP!

YOUR CONCERNS ARE MOST NOBLE, WARRIOR! BUT THY FRIENDS LIE FAR BEYOND THE REACH OF THINE AID!

SSZZZAK

WHO...?



I AM MODRED, AND I HAVE COME TO FETCH THREE AS DISCIPLES OF THE ONE GREAT LORD--

--CHTHON!



YOU TALK IT UP BIG, MISTER! BUT I'VE GOT A COUPLE OF BIG WORDS MYSELF! LIKE--

--AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!



WHA--Z HOLY CRUD! JUST WHEN IT FINALLY STOPS RAININ', THIS DUDE CONJURES UP A SHOWER OF ROCKS!

DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, FALCON. JUST DO YOUR JOB!



SWELL. FOR A MINUTE THERE, I FORGOT I WAS THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK.



THIS SKULL LOOKS LIKE IT CAME FROM SOME KIND OF ANIMAL. BUT WHAT ANIMAL WEARS ARMOUR?



PUZZLEMENT GROWS, AS BENEATH THE OVERCAST GRUMBLING SKIES OF TRANSIA, THE SOLEMN BEAST CONTEMPLATES, SEARCHING FOR A MEMORY...



...WHILE A SHORT MILE DOWN THE MOUNTAINSIDE, HIS COMRADES CONTINUE THEIR SOMEWHAT MORE STRENUOUS ACTIVITY!



THOU ART QUITE DEFT AT AVOIDING YON STONY MISSILES, MILADY!



PRITHEE, LET US SEE IF THOU ART EQUALLY ADEPT--

"...AT SHUNNING THE VERY FIRE OF HEAVEN ITSELF!"

UHHNNNN



THIS GUY DOWNED FALC AND MS. MARVEL LIKE THEY WERE AMATEURS-- BUT HE'S UP AGAINST AN OLD WAR-HORSE NOW!

ONE WHO KNOWS THAT A LITTLE GUILF CAN OFTEN SUCCEED WHERE A FRONTAL ATTACK--







WHILE, CONTEMPORANEOUSLY, BACK AT THE SCENE OF THE FALLEN AVENGERS...

VERILY IF THESE BE EXAMPLES OF WHAT MORTAL MIGHT HATH COME TO, CHTHON SHALL HAVE LITTLE HINDRANCE IN ESTABLISHING HIS NEW ORDER.



ALAS, MY DEAR, THAT HE DID BUT I--



-- DID NOT!

CURLS OF ARCAIC
FORCE STREAM
FROM A HAND
THAT ONCE
BELONGED TO
WANDA FRANK--

--AND FOUR SEMI-CONSCIOUS
AVENGERS FIND THEMSELVES
WAFTED, LIKE SUMMER LEAVES,
THROUGH FOREST AND GLADE--

--UP THE SIDE OF WUNDAGORE MOUNTAIN--

--AND INTO A SCENE
OF FROZEN HELL!

IT IS DONE--THE CIRCLE
IS COMPLETE, SOON, BY
THE POWER OF THE WORLD
SHALL BE MINE-- OR
ELSE I'LL DECIMATE
A BLOOD-SPATTERED
SMEAR BENEATH MY
THUMB!

THIS MOMENT HAS
BEEN A LONG TIME
COMING, MODRED, AND
I HAVE WAITED FOR
IT, PATIENTLY...

...EVER SINCE THE DAY EONS AGO, WHEN I FIRST
SCRIBED THE DARKHOLD IN WORDS OF FIRE, MY SISTER
AND I WERE THE LAST OF THE EARTH-SPIRITS WHO
FORMED THIS FERTILE SPHERE, YET WE WERE TO
BE DEPOSED BY NEWER GODS. HOWEVER, EVEN
SPIRITS SHUN DEATH--

...AND SO
MY SISTER
INFUSED
HER
ESSENCE
INTO ALL
LIVING
THINGS,
SURVIVING
IN LEGEND
AS MOTHER
EARTH--

...WHILE I FLED TO A NETHER
PLANE, LEAVING THE DARKHOLD
TO PROVIDE A GATEWAY FOR
MY EVENTUAL RETURN.

"THEN, IN THE DARK AGES OF THE SIXTH
CENTURY, THE BEGUILING MORGAN LE FEY
AND HER CULT OF SELF-STYLED DARKHOLDERS
SOUGHT TO SUMMON ME TO SERVE THEM.

"THROUGH THE
YEARS, MY INDE-
STRUCTIBLE TOME
ENDURED, BEING USED
AND MISUSED BY MYSTICS
AND DABBLERS OF MANY
NATIONS WHILE, PATIENTLY,
I BIDE MY TIME.

"BUT I AM BEYOND THE
CONTROL OF ANY FOOLISH
MORTAL, AND WHEN THE
DARKHOLDERS LEARNED THEIR
ERROR, THEY TRIED TO
BANISH ME BACK TO THE
NETHER-REALM--

...BUT I WERE SUCCESSFUL
ONLY IN IMPRISONING ME IN
THE MOUNTAIN THAT WAS
LATER TO BE CALLED
WUNDAGORE

"IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT A TRAITOR
IN MORGAN'S BAND--ONE MAGNUS BY
NAME--STOLE THE DARKHOLD AND
SECRETED IT IN AN ENCHANTED TOWER
WHERE NO ONE WITH EVIL INTENT
COULD ENTER...

"... BUT EVEN THERE, THE DARKHOLD WAS NOT WITHOUT POWER. FOR THE WELL-MEANING MODRED SOUGHT TO USE THE TOME FOR GOOD--"



"--AND PAID FOR THAT FOLLY WITH HIS SOUL!"

"THE DARKHOLD WAS LATER REMOVED BY ST. BRENDAN, AND PASSED THROUGH HISTORY IN THE HANDS OF MANY LEARNED AND UNLEARNED MEN: CAGLIOSTRO, TABOO--"



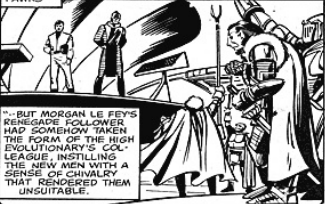
"--AND FINALLY GREGOR RUSSOFF, WHO CURSED HIS OWN NAME WITH ITS EVIL."

"TO FINANCE HIS DARK PURSUITS, RUSSOFF SOLD PART OF HIS ESTATE, WHICH INCLUDED THE MOUNTAIN IN WHICH I WAS IMPRISONED."



"THE SCIENTIST BUYERS FOUND URANIUM THERE, AND USED THAT WEALTH TO BUILD WUNDAGORE."

"I PUZZLED AT THE STRANGE MAGIC CALLED 'SCIENCE' THAT TURNED ANIMALS INTO MEN ABOVE ME, AND FOR A TIME CONSIDERED USING THESE NEW MEN AS MY PAWNS--"



"--BUT MORGAN LE FEY'S RENEGADE FOLLOWER HAD SOMEHOW TAKEN THE FORM OF THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY'S COLLEAGUE, INSTILLING THE NEW MEN WITH A SENSE OF CHIVALRY THAT RENDERED THEM UNSUITABLE."

"FORCED TO RELY SOLELY ON MY FEARSOME HOST, THE OTHER, I ATTACKED WUNDAGORE ALONE--"



"--ONLY TO BE VANQUISHED BY THE COMBINED MIGHT OF SIXTH CENTURY SORCERY AND TWENTIETH CENTURY SCIENCE."

"BUT EVEN
IN DEFEAT,
I PLANTED
SEEDS OF
FUTURE
VICTORY..."



"...FOR A CHILD WAS BORN
THAT NIGHT IN WUNDAGORE,
A GIRL NAMED WANDA WHOSE
LATENT SCIENCE-SPAWNED
POWER WAS AWESOME. AS
I RETURNED TO THE MOUN-
TAIN, I IMBUED HER WITH
LATENT **MAGICAL**
POTENTIAL AS WELL!"

"SEVERAL TIMES AS SHE GREW, I
DIMINISHED THE FEMALE'S SCIENCE-
ROOTED POWERS, HOPING THAT SHE
WOULD TURN TO SORCEROUS ALTErna-
TIVES. BUT IT WAS ONLY WHEN HER
OVERLY PROTECTIVE BROTHER LEFT
TO WED THAT SHE SOUGHT TUTELAGE
IN THAT AREA--"



"--AND AT LAST BECAME THE ADEPT
WORTHY OF BEING MY NEW, DUAL-
NATURED HOST!"

"THERE WAS BUT ONE LAST
DETAIL TO BE SEEN TO --
THE RENEGADE DARKHOLDER,
MAGNUS."



"I KNEW
THAT THE
RECENTLY
REVIVED
SORCERER,
MOPRED, HAD
ALREADY BEEN
TAINTED BY
THE
DARKHOLD--"

"...AND SO IT WAS A SIMPLE
MATTER TO GAIN HIS FULL
ALLEGIANCE IN A CONTRIVED
BATTLE WITH THE OTHER."

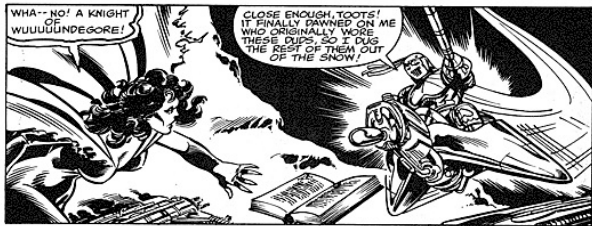


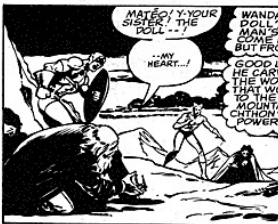
"AFTERWARDS,
HE WAS
QUITE AGREEABLE TO
TRICKING MAGNUS IN-
TO BEING HALF A WORLD
AWAY WHEN I AROSE."

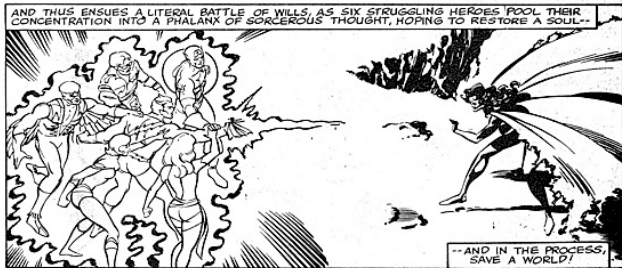


"AND NOW I HAVE COMPLETELY
SUBGATED THE SOUL OF WANDA
FRANK, HER BODY, HER SCIENTIFIC
AND SORCEROUS ABILITIES
BELONG ONLY TO CHTHON! AND
WITH THEM, I SHALL
BEND ALL OF NATURE TO MY
WILL! AND--"

"MY LORD!
SOMETHING
APPROACHETH!"







ON THE RECEIVING END OF THAT EMOTIONAL BARRAGE, CHTHON GLOATS -- BUT IT IS AN EXULTATION SHORT-LIVED. FOR HE HAD UNDERESTIMATED THAT FORCE WHICH SOME HUMANS CALL "GOOD" AND OTHERS CALL "LOVE"

AND THUS THE VERY HEAVENS SHRIEK WITH CHTHON'S ANGER AS HIS ESSENCE IS TORN FORCIBLY FROM ITS NEWLY-CONQUERED VESSEL TO REPLACE THE SOUL OF WANDA FRANK, TRAPPED IN AN EFFIGY OF CARVEN WOOD.



BUT QUICKSILVER'S MIND IS AS QUICK AS HIS FEET!



HE GRABS THE DOLL AND, SPRINTING TO A NEARBY OUTCROPPING--

--FLINGS THAT SEGMENTED HORROR FAR--



--INTO THE SNOW-SWEPT CRATER THAT WAS ONCE GLORIOUS WUNDAGORE!



WANDA! ARE YOU--?

DON'T WORRY, CAP, I'M MY OLD SELF AGAIN-- AND IN MORE CONTROL OF MY POWERS THAN EVER! SO STAND BACK--



YES, THE HOUSE--



--THIS COMBINATION HEX BOLT AND MUTANT BLAST IS GOING TO BRING THE HOUSE DOWN!

--AND HALF A MOUNTAIN!



NO! THIS CAN'T HAPPEN! I'M CHTHON!

CHTHOOOOOOOOO



IT IS OVER. DJANGO'S MAGIC, AND HIS BELIEF, GAVE US THE KEY.

YES, PIETRO, DJANGO MAXIMOFF SAVED OUR LIVES--



--BY GIVING HIS OWN... WITH A HEART THAT NEVER ONCE STOPPED LOVING US.

SILENCE FOLLOWS... AS DO TEARS.



AND LATER, AFTER EVERYONE HAS GATHERED FOR A SIMPLE, POIGNANT CEREMONY...

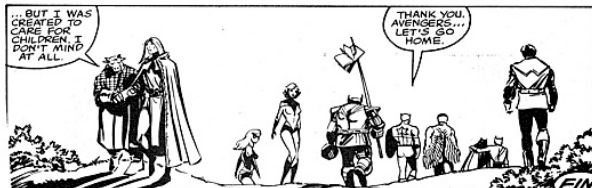
HE WAS BURIED IN THE FOREST HE LOVED SO MUCH. I HOPE HE'LL BE HAPPY AT LAST.

I THINK HE WILL BE, WANDA.



BOYA, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR MODRED? WITHOUT CHTHON TO GUIDE HIM, HE'S BECOME AS MINDLESS AS AN INFANT.

I KNOW, CAPTAIN...



...BUT I WAS CREATED TO CARE FOR CHILDREN. I DON'T MIND AT ALL.

THANK YOU, AVENGERS... LET'S GO HOME.

FIN

Inside the Bullpen!

Our intention is to introduce you to the processes involved in the production of comics. We start with comic covers. This feature is the first of a three part series. Parts 2 and 3 — 'A day at the Lithographers' and 'A day at the printers' will be featured in future issues of Marvel Superheroes, so keep a look out! If you have any queries or questions you would like to ask don't hesitate to write.

Stage 1

Artwork

The artwork may arrive in one of three forms: if re-print — as a black and white line print or a colour transparency. If original artwork — on board, normally twice the publication size.

Stage 2

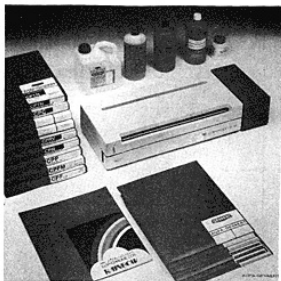
PMT's

The black and white artwork is enlarged or reduced to the correct size and turned photographically into a bromide.

Below left is the P.M.T. (Photo Mechanical Transfer) camera used in this process. Below right, is the developing machine.

Tracings

Transparencies are placed under the lens of the P.M.T. camera, the image is enlarged, projected onto a glass screen and traced.



Layout and Paste-up • Cover lines



2a. The PMT'd artwork is pasted into position.

1. The logo (title); top line and side-box are pasted onto a layout sheet.



2b. The tracing is overlaid in the correct position.



3. The cover lines are written using dry transfer type eg letaset, PMT'd to the correct size, positioned and pasted up on the layout sheet.

Stage 4 — Colour process for black and white artwork

Colour roughs • Colour separation



A photo-copy is taken of the artwork. This is coloured in with felt tip pens and code marked for colour. All colours printed are made up of a combination of blue red or yellow eg. the blue on Spiderman is composed of 100% blue and 25% red. Our code for this is no. 7.

The logo and cover lines are also marked up for colour.

Using the colour roughs as a guide, areas of the picture which are the same colour are blocked in on acetate sheets with a photo-opaque marker. One sheet is used for each colour. (see below)

To maintain exact registration between artwork and acetate both are punched with two holes equidistance apart which key into a pin-bar.



example of colour blocked in on an acetate sheet — in this case flesh.

NEWS

Last month I promised to tell you the future line-up for Rampage and Conan so here goes!

Rampage will feature: the Eagle awards winning X-Men; the blue-eyed ever loving Thing and the favourite character from Blockbuster — Iron Fist!

Inside Comics will feature a regular Mighty Marvel brain-picking quiz with special prizes for the winners. Top ten rating charts for Marvels best loved comics, writers and artists — start sending your top ten lists in now! Fanzine reviews; pin-ups, USA Marvel future attraction bulletins plus articles, interviews and Comic Mart as per usual.

Conan fans can look forward to regular feature pages focusing on the Hyborian Age; information on the forthcoming Conan movie by Dino De Laurentis and an opportunity to take part in a logo design competition for the letters page! There's plenty doing See you next ish!

Bernie Faye



MIGHTY MARVEL

WIN one or more of our fabulous prizes by taking part in our competition Bonanza. Grab a pen and chance your luck, skill or both!

1. Competitions close 21st January 1981.
2. No correspondence will be entered into.
3. The editor's decision is final.
4. Winners will be notified by post.
5. Winners' names will appear in MSH's 384.
6. Employees and employees' relations of Marvel Comics Ltd, are not eligible for entry.

7. All entries must be clearly addressed with the name of the competition or competitions stated.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:
LUCKY DIP/BUDDING ARTIST/
QUIZ:
MARVEL COMICS,
JADWIN HOUSE,
205-211 KENTISH TOWN ROAD,
LONDON NW5.

★ QUIZ ★ ★ ★ QUIZ ★ ★ QUIZ ★ ★ ★ QUIZ ★

BELOW ARE THE SECRET IDENTITIES OF 15 MARVEL HEROES. BY WHAT NAME ARE THEY BETTER KNOWN?

PETER PARKER
TONY STARK
BRUCE BANNER
SIMON WILLIAMS
CAROL DENVERS
JEAN GREY
STEVE ROGERS
REED RICHARDS
BRIAN BRADOCK
CLINT BARTON
HANK McKOY
MATT MURDOCK
WARREN WORTHINGTON
LUTHER MANNING
TANIA BELINSKY
JIM HAMMOND

SEND YOUR ENTRIES ON A POSTCARD WITH YOUR ANSWERS CLEARLY NUMBERED — DON'T WORRY IF YOU CAN'T GET THEM ALL.

THE WINNER WILL BE IN SWIFT RECEIPT OF A FULL YEARS SUBSCRIPTION TO MARVEL SUPERHEROES!

COMPETITION BONANZA!

BUDDING ARTIST SECTION:-

HOW WILL BEN GRIMM (THE THING) APPEAR IN ABOUT A MILLION YEARS FROM NOW? THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY IS KEEN TO FIND OUT - AND SO ARE WE.

SO WHY NOT GIVE US A BLAST OF YOUR IMAGINATION? HAVE A PRACTISE FIRST, THEN FILL IN THE PICTURE AND SEND IT TO US POSTE HASTE.

REMEMBER - BLACK AND WHITE ONLY. BEST ENTRIES WILL APPEAR IN MSH's 384.



Feel lucky; then fill out the Lucky Dip Voucher and send it to us. Easy. The first five vouchers picked from the Bullpen Barrel will be in receipt of very special prizes - Mighty Marvel Annuals.

Two of them however are BOOBY PRIZES! These will find their way to the owners of the 2nd and 4th vouchers to be picked.

I'll tell you now - the booby prize annuals look as normal but inside?

All annuals will be signed by the British Bullpen - Good luck!



LUCKY DIP VOUCHER



FILL IN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS BELOW. CUT OUT VOUCHER AND SEND IT TO:
LUCKY DIP; MARVEL COMICS, 205-211 JADWIN HOUSE,
KENTISH TOWN ROAD, LONDON N.W.5.

Name

Address



ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY JAN. 21st.
NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF WINNERS WILL APPEAR IN M.S.H. 384



ATTENTION MARVELITES!

**DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S
ISSUE OF** ***RAMPAGE***

**FIND OUT ABOUT
THE SSI
THE EAGLE AWARDS!
UP AND COMING CHANGES
IN *RAMPAGE*!**

**BE ENTHRALLED BY
TIME-
SMASHER
THE X-MEN
THE THING**

PRIZES

A MARVEL MONTHLY 45p



MARCH
1982 NP 383
RR 8.3p (inc. VAT)

**MARVEL
Super-Heroes**



EXPOSE
THE BRITISH BULLPEN REVEALED!
★ CAPTAIN BRITAIN! ★
★ THE AVENGERS! ★
★ NIGHT RAVEN! ★
★ AND... ★

45p

NP 44
FEB
1982

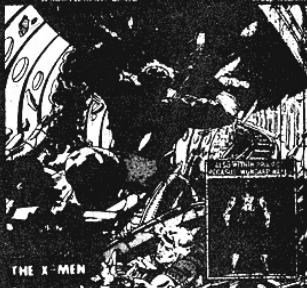


RAMPAGE MAGAZINE
THE ALL-NEW, ALL-DIFFERENT

X-MEN

A MARVEL MONTHLY 45p

REG. INC. MIP



THE X-MEN

★★★★ **LOOK OUT!** ★★★★★

**DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S
MARVEL SUPERHEROES!
LEARN THE SECRETS OF
THE BRITISH BULLPEN!**

EXCITEMENT GALORE!

in

**CAPTAIN BRITAIN!
NIGHT RAVEN I
THE AVENGERS!**



Night Raven

Death's Divide

STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL NEARY

SOCLALITE COMMITS SUICIDE proclaimed the headline. Simple words, but nevertheless words to cause much concern throughout the city that morning. Amid the tinkle of silverware and clink of coffee cups, fingers that might otherwise be reaching for the marmalade clutched at the early edition of the Clarion, while their owners read of the passing of Oscar Charlesworth. If the news caused a minor scandal among the cafe society of the city, was it not all the more incongruous that the strange being gazing at a tattered copy of the Clarion felt more a sense of loss than any of them?

By the glow of the ancient oil lamp, the hunched figure read, his claw-like hands smoothing the tattered paper into place as his eyes drank in every detail of the front page story. He constantly manoeuvred the appropriate

areas of print into the lamp's feeble light. If his face had been capable of showing emotion, the Night Raven would have registered a scowl every bit as dark as the vaulted chambers that were his dwelling-place.

Suddenly he stood, drawing his greatcoat collar about his face as he did so, for although alone, some habits were as much a part of him as the bleached bone he had come to know as his face. His mind was far away from these matters and his thoughts centred upon the death of his old acquaintance Oscar.

To anyone entering the room at this moment, it would seem that it was completely devoid of occupation; the

Night Raven had momentarily become a part of the inky shadow which granted anonymity to the outer reaches of the chamber. It was when he was alone that the man was at his most inhuman, for it was then that he to some extent, relaxed the cosmetic affectations which he adopted for the benefit of others.

Alternately lurching and ducking from shadow to shadow he gyrated about his rooms. His movements bore more resemblance to those of a crippled raven than a human being. Perhaps the most chilling aspect of his behaviour was the series of strange gasps and shrill wheezings that he made no effort to curtail. The sounds



By the glow of the ancient oil lamp, the hunched figure read.

Night Raven

were, however, uttered with the same casual ease with which a foreigner might speak his native language, and were expressions of raw emotion rather than mere utterances of words.

Settling in a large wing chair facing away from the light, his mind fell back across the years to his first meeting with Oscar. In his mind's eye he could see the tents, stretching across the river, affording such shelter as they might against the blazing Sudanese sun. The bridge was about one third finished when he had first heard the natives referring in wonderment to "the one who suffers from the cold" . . . it was Oscar, of course, and it was a mark of the man's eccentricity that he dressed heavily even under the desert sun. It was the peculiar occurrences like these which made memories of the man all the more enduring. He could picture Oscar now, in his tent, eating a vast and sumptuous repast from best silver, a bottle of chilled Chablis at his elbow. He always dressed in a dinner jacket to eat, never allowing himself to succumb to the harshness of the desert environment. The Night-Raven reflected that with Oscar's death went a man who cared deeply for his fellows . . . had he not caused a minor sensation by staying behind to build a network of irrigation channels for the natives? Oscar was a man who chose to use his wealth and position for the good of others. He was a man seldom found . . . but a man now lost!

Oscar's wealth and sense of duty to his fellow man had always tended to push him a little more into the limelight than he might have wished. His attempts to perform his characteristically altruistic deeds and remain behind the scenes were two aims that had always conflicted and Oscar's recent nomination for the office of Mayor was some reflection of the community's high regard for him. Despite his eccentric behaviour, he was universally regarded as a man of his word, a man of principle. It was the fact that Oscar's 'suicide' had occurred within days of his nomination that made the Night-Raven suspect that those who feared Oscar's incorruptibility may have acted. If that were the case, then he too must act . . .

Wending his way through the rush-hour traffic jams, Night-Raven was en route to Oscar's house in the residential district of the city. In some strange way, the crowded streets, ringing with newsboys' cries and the the handbells

of street-corner Santa-Clauses afforded complete anonymity . . . here, Night-Raven was just another man shielding his face against the cold — he liked the feeling.

The snow began to crunch instead of splash beneath his feet, and the sounds of the crowd receded. He was drawing near to Oscar's dwelling. Looking into the spacious rooms, he could see families together, talking, laughing, playing games and indulging in all the pre-Christmas festivities that he was well aware were denied to one such as he.

He had never cared much for family life, so why should he feel so desperately envious of them now? He saw fathers that reminded him of Oscar, their strange, pipe-smoking air of leisure . . . the smoking-jackets, cravats even, it occurred to the Night-Raven that it had been the stamp of Oscars class as much as any personal individuality that had caused him to seem so different to those of humbler origins.

As he approached the house named in the newspaper story, he wondered was his concern due to a sense of duty, or could it be his desire to clear up the loose-ends, the unanswered questions that even now gnawed at his subconscious? Why had there always been strange stories and rumours about the man? — Jealousy perhaps? While there was no denying that this was a possibility, as a motive amongst Sudanese tribesmen it seemed quite absurd! — Surely they would have no cause to single Oscar out, for to their eyes, every European there lived like a king. Perhaps there was significance in the way the natives used to refer to Oscar with a word meaning 'two men', rather than the usual word for a big man? As the Night-Raven collected his thoughts, perhaps the strangest occurrence concerning Oscar came to mind. Oscar had some years before been at the centre of a minor scandal when he was taken to court by a neighbour. The woman in question maintained that each night, shortly after sunset, winter and summer alike, Oscar would stand, shirtless in the darkness of his balcony watching her. The case had been dismissed due to insufficient evidence being produced by the prosecuting counsel. The Night-Raven reflected that whatever the underlying reasons for Oscar's actions, it was a strange departure indeed from his over-clad days in the Sudan!

Oscar's home was unfit save for a

few lights on the second floor — the family Doctor's apartment, if the newspaper story was to be believed. It had been the Doctor who had carried out the post-mortem, and with indecent haste consigned the body to be cremated. It was as well that he was nearby, for he would be the second witness, mused the Night-Raven . . . first, the house itself had much to tell him!

Within seconds, the Night-Raven was standing in the room which had been Oscar's lounge. It was spacious and well furnished. The fruits of Oscar's travels in the Far East decorated the room, lending to it an Oriental ambience that the Night-Raven found strangely unnerving. The walls were bedecked with Chinese tapestries and large ornate rugs. These were interspersed with crossed daggers, swords and other items of warfare.

Passing through the opulence afforded by the elegant stately and rich carpeting that completed the room, Night-Raven traversed the shadows, avoiding the pools of light flooding wanly in from the street.

The adjoining room was the snug. It was smaller and more welcoming, and seemed to possess something of the air of a Sea Captain's study. Walls of books served to encompass two enormous leather armchairs, which stood at either side of a vast fireplace. Between the chairs, a low table . . . and on the table an ornate, engraved Oriental casket. It looked very much out of place here, like an errant museum piece, accidentally placed in the Egyptian room instead of in the African room. There was a slight odour in the air — sickly, sweet . . . morphine, or some other painkiller perhaps? The casket itself, although some four or five inches deep, revealed only a shallow tray when the lid was lifted. In the tray lay the dusty residue of a substance it had once held. It's distinctive odour immediately pinpointed it as the source of the smell which the Night-Raven had noticed in the air upon entering.

Curious to see what other treasures the casket might hold, the Night-Raven's fingers probed the artifact for hidden catches. Suddenly, without consciously triggering a release-catch, Night-Raven watched as five glass balls, about the size of billiards, dropped with a clatter onto the marble surface of the low table! "sspahh" — a

Night Raven



She reached out imploringly as she was sucked from him by some great unseen blackness.

hiss of exasperation and self-annoyance escaped his gritted teeth, as his hand stilled the rolling globes. A brief pause served to confirm his hope that he had not been heard. The remainder of his examination was conducted above his lap in case the casket held yet more secrets.

From the size of the recess which held the globes, it seemed that there was at least one more part to this particular Chinese puzzle! A drawer, which slid smoothly out, revealed the final contents of the casket . . . a flint and steel, and a small amount of tinder were resting in a strange bowl engraved with a dragon's head motif.

Upon closer examination, it became clear to Night-Raven that the burnt residue which was encrusted upon the metal of the bowl must have been caused by igniting the crystals that had at one time filled the tray. The flint and steel certainly dated the apparatus, but the Night-Raven's hand already held his matches. Laying a small amount of the tinder in the bowl, he carefully tapped the dusty crystal residue from the tray of the casket onto it. As he extended a flaring match towards the mixture, the Night-Raven stared impassionately as it silently ignited, a blue-green glow

hovered some small distance above the mix itself. It was no surprise that the now familiar heady smell drifted from the bowl, what was surprising was that the glass balls shone and iridesced with a light and life of their own.

Unable to resist the compulsion within, Night-Raven allowed his hands to caress the globes. They were warm to the touch, and the glow they emitted grew brighter, brighter until he could no longer see his hands within the light. A euphoria grew within him as the light changed colour . . . red to orange to red to green the glow grew, it tilted and began to spin crazily. The light danced like Saint Elmo's fire, then it flowed across his entire being . . . enveloping him as surely as water envelopes a diver — but in that water, what warmth, what safety.

He had not felt this way since he was a child — running in to the house, leaving the chill dusk of another school-day behind the slamming front door . . . the vast, all-encompassing warmth of his mother as she swept him to her . . . flour on her pinafore . . . the warm smell of something delicious baking in the oven . . . this place was all these things, and more!

Then, in the mists which swirled and played about him, for all the world like a magician's stage effect, he perceived a movement, a presence. It was a woman, and behind her, were two other figures . . . far less clearly visible; one was a good deal larger than the woman, and one considerably smaller.

Drawing near, the woman's hands were extended in welcome . . . the look of horror which the Night-Raven expected to see cross her face as she saw his never came. Instead, she came ever closer, closer, until she took his face between her soft hands . . . he felt her palms upon his yielding cheeks, and in that instant he knew he was no longer as he had been . . . he was whole again!

Grasping her slim wrists at each side of his face he turned his head sideways and kissed the palms of this woman in white. His happiness knew no bounds, a weight was lifted from his shoulders . . . he was no longer a thing of horror, fit only to be an exhibit in a carnival sideshow! He gazed into the woman's eyes, as she gazed back into his . . . until little by little she drew from him by degrees, as if each element of time were preserved in aspic. — She reached out imploringly as she was sucked from him by some great unseen blackness. Her voice, a voice from the soul itself, spoke imploringly across the divide . . . "Don't leave . . . don't leave us . . ." A fraction before the mists enfolded her, Night-Raven caught his first and only glimpse of her two companions. With a start, he recognised the large smiling man at her side to be Oscar himself! . . . He wore a shirt which was open to the waist, revealing a broad tanned torso. His posture was reminiscent of that of a triumphant Matador. He looked magnificent!

The flashing smile of the diminutive third member of the trio was the last image to register upon the Night-Raven's fading consciousness. The cries which he uttered to the unearthly trio still rang in his ears as he opened his eyes. He was lying face downwards on the floor of Oscar's snug, the bare bone of his face pressed into the softness of the fireside rug. Raising his gaze, he found himself looking down the wrong end of a large pistol.

**CONTINUED
NEXT ISSUE!**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ MYSTERY STRIP SPOT: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Each month we will be bringing you something different — so keep a look out and send us your suggestions.

DOMINIC FORTUNE: BRIGAND FOR HIRE!

GHOUL OF MY DREAMS



IN 1937, NEW YORK CITY HAS
NOT YET BECOME THE
GOMORRAH OF THE EAST.

BUT THERE HAS
ALWAYS BEEN
ILLEGAL ACTIVITY
AND THERE
ALWAYS WILL BE.

AND SOME OF IT SPEAKS A STRANGE
LANGUAGE...

BABY NEEDS
NEW SHOES.

ROLL THEM
BONES,
MISTER
FORTUNE.

Script: DENNY O'NEIL

Art: HOWARD CHAYKIN

CALL ME DOMINIC,
ACEY. IN FACT,
CALL ME LUCKY
DOMINIC FORTUNE.

OH, THE
DICE ARE
SWEET
TONIGHT!

-- BUT FOR ONCE I'LL
QUIT WHILE I'M AHEAD.

TOO BAD,
'NOTHER
HOUR AND
YOU'D A
BROKEN
THE BOOK.

SO WHAT'CHA
GONNA DO WITH'CHA
WINNINGS?

I COULD
ROLL 'EM
TILL DAWN--

SPEND,
ACEY. PAINT
OLD GOTHAM
SCARLET
BEFORE I
GO BACK TO
CALIFORNIA.

SOUNDS TERRIF.
IF I CAN BE OF SERVICE,
CALL. ACEY DUGAN
KNOWS A LOTTA ANGLES.
I PUT YOU ONTO THIS
JOINT, DIDN'T I?

YES... AND QUITE
A SET-UP IT IS.
DICE... ROULETTE...
HORSES...

YEAH, THEY
PAY THE
COPS A
BUNDLE
FOR
PROTEC-
TION.

I'D LIKE TO CASH
IN THESE CHIPS. I
THINK YOU'LL FIND
THEY COME TO ELEVEN
THOUSAND DOLLARS.

VERY
GOOD,
GIR.

SUDDENLY--

ALL RIGHT,
YOU MUGS.
FREEZE.

APPARENTLY
THE BUNDLE
THEY PAY ISN'T
BIG ENOUGH!



I TRUST
YOU HAVE
A PLAN.

IF I GET TOSSED IN THE CLINK,
THE LADY I'M VACATIONING
WITH WILL BE VERY UPSET.

SHE DOESN'T
APPROVE OF
MY GAMBLING--

-- OR A HELL OF A
LOT ELSE THAT I DO!

NO SWEAT AND
NO FRET, MISTER F--



-- I
GOT'CHA
COVERED.
I KNOW A
SECRET
EXIT.

THEN
LET'S
USE
IT.



I'M ALLERGIC
TO RIOTS.



HERE WE ARE...
SAFE AS HOUSES.
AIN'T A COPPER IN
TOWN HEPPED UP
TO THIS TURF.

ONCE OVER
THAT FENCE,
WE'LL BE JUST
A PART OF THE
PASSIN'
SCENE.

OKAY, YOU
BUZZARDS--



-- STEP
DOWN
REAL
SLOW.

WE'D LOVE
AN EXCUSE
TO FOG YOU.



SHORTLY--
YOU AIN'T
SORE,
ARE YOU?

WELL, LET'S SAY I'M NOT
HAPPY. JAIL WASN'T ON
MY TOURIST ITINERARY.

AND--

ON YOUR FEET, FORTUNE. THE COMMISSIONER WANTS TO SEE YOU.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE THRILLED.

COMMISSIONER GARDLE, I PRESUME. I SEE YOU'VE ALREADY MET MY FRIEND SABBATH RAVEN.

I HAVE, MISS RAVEN PAID YOUR BAIL. YOU'RE FREE TO GO-- TEMPORARILY.

HOWEVER, IF YOU'D LIKE TO STAY FREE YOU MIGHT CONSIDER DOING ME A FAVOUR.

SUCH AS--?

I'VE CHECKED INTO YOUR BACKGROUND, FORTUNE. YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY A MODEL CITIZEN.

THE NICEST THING YOU'VE BEEN CALLED IS "BRISAND FOR HIRE."

THE WORST IS "LOUSY SON-OF-A--"

I HAVE A FRIEND NAMED ZELDA PINKLEY. SHE'S GOTTEN HERSELF MIXED UP WITH A CERTAIN LOUIE KELT--

NEVER MIND, THE POINT IS, I NEED YOUR KIND OF WORK DONE... THE KIND THAT MAY NOT BE PRECISELY LEGAL.

I CATCH YOUR DRIFT.

AND YOU'D LIKE DOM TO DO YOUR PROVING FOR YOU.

OR WHATEVER ELSE IT TAKES TO UNTANGLE ZELDA.

--A COMMON MOBSTER. UNFORTUNATELY, WE CAN'T PROVE ANYTHING AGAINST KELT.

CONSIDER HER UNTANGLED, COMMISSIONER.

AND, AT A WEST SIDENIGHTCLUB...



--NOT TERRIBLY BRIGHT, BUT SWEET AS TAFFY.

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, SABBATH. YOU KNOW THIS ZELDA PINKLEY DAME?

WE WERE CLASSMATES, DOM. SHE'S VERY SWEET..



OBVIOUSLY THE COMMISSIONER HAS A REAL LETCH FOR HER.

SHE ALWAYS DID ATTRACT OLDER MEN.

IT'S ONE THING WE HAD IN COMMON.

I'LL ASKORE THAT.

YOU SURE SHE'S HERE?

HER HOUSE-KEEPER SAID SHE IS...

THERE'S ZEL--



ZEL DARLING!

SAB? SAB--

--BATH RAVEN, MY VERY ABSOLUTE FAVOURITE CHUM IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD!

I ADORE YOUR PERFUME.

WHO'S YOUR HANDSOME ESCORT?



DOMINIC FORTUNE AT YOUR SERVICE, MISS PINKLEY.

HIYA, MISTER F--

THE VERY DASHING ADVENTURER I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT? YUMMY!



THEN...



INSIDE...



ZOMBIES? YOU MEAN WALKING DEAD? FLESH EATERS? BLOOD DRINKERS?

COME ON! THIS IS 1937, NOT THE DARK AGES!

YOU SHOULD LAY OFF WHATEVER YOU'VE BEEN SMOKING!

IT IS EASY TO MASK IGNORANCE WITH LAUGHTER.

WONDERFUL! A PHILO-SOPHICAL CHIPPY!

EXCUSE ME. I HAVE A PHONE CALL TO MAKE.

HIYA, DOLL. FIND OUT ANYTHING?

LISTEN GOOD, DOM. ZELDA IS GOING TO MARRY KELT... TONIGHT! I'M TO BE THE BRIDESMAID.

I'M WITH THEM NOW, AT KELT'S FUNERAL PARLOUR

AND DOM... THIS MAY SOUND WEIRD, BUT KELT AND HIS MOB AREN'T HUMAN!

THEY'RE GHOULS OR VAMPIRES OR--

--OR ZOMBIES?

DINK MAY BE FULL OF IT... BUT YOU'RE AS LEVEL-HEADED AS THEY COME. IF YOU SAY ZOMBIES, I WON'T ARGUE.

ZELDA HAS PUT ON A COSTUME AND... THIS WILL NOT BE A PARTY YOU'D INVITE YOUR MOTHER TO.

YOU'D BETTER GET YOURSELF DOWN HERE-- AND COME PREPARED!

I GUARANTEE YOU'VE NEVER MET ANYONE LIKE KELT'S PLAYMATES. THEY'RE POSITIVELY--

I THINK YOU'VE SPOKEN LONG ENOUGH, MISS RAVEN.

KELT!

SABBATH!

SOMEBODY
CUT US OFF.

I SMELL
TROUBLE!
I HAVE A
FEELING
I'LL BE
KICKING
SOME TAIL
BEFORE
MORNING!

...SHED THIS STUPID
TUXEDO -- AND GET
MYSELF WEAPONS.

GUNS AND FISTS MIGHT
NOT WORK AGAINST SPOOKS.
BUT I'VE SEEN ENOUGH
MOVIES TO KNOW WHAT
WILL.

A COUPLE
OF THINGS I
HAVE TO DO...

I'LL HAVE
TO FIND A
VEGETABLE
STAND... AND
A CHURCH.



MEANWHILE...

PREPARE
HER!

TELL
THESE FREAKS
TO TURN ME
LOOSE, KELT,
OR I'LL --

YOU
WILL DO
NOTHING,
EXCEPT
PARTICIPATE
IN THE
WEDDING.

YOU WILL FIND
THE CEREMONY
INTERESTING...
WHILE YOU LIVE!

NOW, NOW,
YOU ALWAYS
WERE
SO VERY
ABSOLUTELY
EXCITABLE!



Soon...

HOW COME I HAVE TO BE
BLINDFOLDED? I MEAN, I
WASN'T BLINDFOLDED AT MY
FIRST FOUR WEDDINGS.

BUT THIS RITUAL IS UNIQUE... AND PERMANENT!

ZELDA... DON'T
LISTEN TO HIM.
CUT ME LOOSE!

CUT?

BUT BEFORE
THE BLADE
CAN DESCEND...

PARTY'S
OVER,
GANG!

Eh...?

YOU'RE EXPECTING ME TO PULL MY PISTOL, AREN'T YOU?

OR MAYBE TAKE A SWING AT YOU!

I HATE TO DISAPPOINT SUCH A CHOICE COLLECTION OF GEEKS--

--BUT I'M NOT STUPID!

I'VE GOT SOMETHING STRONGER THAN BULLETS--

--A STRING OF PURE GARLIC!

NO EFFECT, huh? WELL, HOW ABOUT THIS-- A DEADLY CRUCIFIX!

HOLY WATER?

D-DON'T YOU GUYS EVER GO TO THE MOVIES?

BREAK HIS BACK.



DOMINIC...
YOU
MORON!

JUST
HIT
THEM--

--HIT THEM
WITH YOUR
FIST!

I'LL BE
DARNED!

IT WORKS!

I'LL NEVER BELIEVE
BELA LUGOSI AGAIN!

DESTROY
HIM.

YOU CAN'T
GREENIE-- BUT
I'M BEGINNING
TO THINK
YOU'RE A BUNCH
OF WEAK
SISTERS!

BUNCH OF
RED-EYED
SISSIES!

OKAY!
I TAKE
BACK THE
SISSIE
PART!

YOU SOCK HARD! BUT YOU HAVE
NO FINESSE... NO TECHNIQUE!

LISTEN, I'VE
FOUGHT EVERYTHING
FROM ZULUS TO
ALDERMEN-- AND TAKE
IT FROM ME--

-- YOU HAVE NO FUTURE AS
BRAWLERS! YOU'RE SLOW... CLUMSY--

-- AND YOU BLEED
TOO EASILY!

Boy, do you guys ever bleed!

DOM...
BEHIND
YOU--?

MIDDLE-
SOME
FOOL--?

WELL, WELL... ENTER
THE FAMOUS MISTER
KELT-- COMPLETE
WITH GAUDY OUTFIT
AND PIG STICKER!

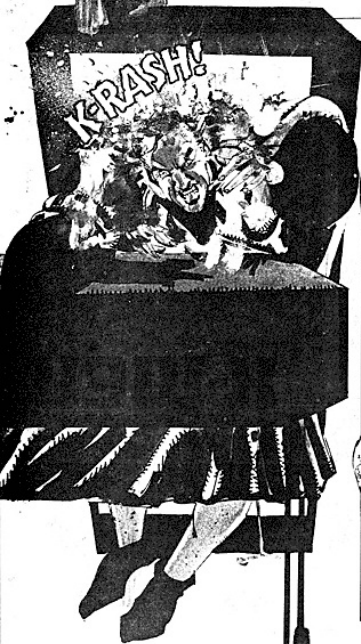
AT LEAST YOU
LOOK HEALTHIER THAN
YOUR HENCHMEN--

-- IF MEN
IS THE RIGHT
TERM FOR
THEM!

YOU DON'T
SEEM TO
BE IN THE
MOOD FOR
BANTER.

TOO BAD. I'D HOPED
YOU WOULD BE MORE
CONVERSATIONAL
THAN THE REST!

AFTER ALL, AT
LEAST YOU'RE ALIVE.



OH MY SWEET LORD...
HE WASN'T ALIVE...

AT LEAST
NOT FOR
YEARS.

HE WAS
WEARING
PAINT--

--AND
UNDERNEATH...
DECAY--

--THE
STENCH
OF THE
GRAVE.



WHATEVER WAS ON THOSE
SHELVES FINISHED HIM--
AN ENDING THAT WAS
PROBABLY LONG OVERDUE.

I CAN'T BEGIN
TO FIGURE OUT
WHAT'S HAPPENED...
AND I DON'T
WANT TO.

ME
EITHER,
DAMN--

-- YOU MAY NOT BE
THE SMARTEST MAN
IN THE WORLD... OR
THE NICEST...

BUT I
DO COME
THROUGH,
DON'T I?

LIKE
GANG-
BUSTERS,
DARLING.

ANYWAY, THE COMMISSIONER OUGHT TO
BE SATISFIED.

YOU'RE
OFF THE
HOOK!

DAR-R-RN IT.
I AM SO VERY
ABSOLUTELY
UNHAPPY.

I DON'T
BLAME
YOU.

THE WHOLE
EXPERIENCE
MUST
HAVE BEEN
TERRIBLE.

WORSE THAN
THAT? NOW
I HAVE TO
CANCEL MY
HONEYMOON--

--UNLESS I CAN
FIND SOMEBODY
ELSE TO MARRY!

BESIDES,
THIS DRINK
IS AWFUL.

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